



\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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## **A New Year but an Old Truth- There's No Safe Place for Impaired Drivers to Hide**

**Olympia-** Washington State Patrol (WSP) Troopers will be out looking for impaired drivers this week in preparation for the New Year. Patrols will be increased to include Troopers brought out to supplement regularly assigned patrols. WSP has partnered with five other states to form the Western States Traffic Safety Coalition. Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada and Arizona are working together to save lives by removing impaired drivers from all of our roadways. The message is clear; A New Year but an old truth- There's no safe place for impaired drivers to hide.

These extra patrols will include specially trained troopers to help identify and detect drug impaired drivers. Most WSP troopers receive additional training in drug impaired driver detection. This training, Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) is specifically focused on detecting drivers impaired by drugs. Troopers trained as Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) will also be out to assist in identifying and detecting drug impaired drivers. DREs receive training to identify what drugs a driver may be impaired by.

You can't drive safely if you're impaired. That's why it's illegal everywhere in America to drive under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, opioids, methamphetamines, or any potentially impairing drug—prescribed or over the counter. There are many misconceptions about marijuana use, including “stories” that marijuana can't impair you or that marijuana use can actually make you a safer driver. Several scientific studies indicate these assertions are false.<sup>1</sup> Driving while impaired by any substance—legal or illegal—puts you and others in harm's way.

The Western States Traffic Safety Coalition encourages everyone to plan ahead, especially when celebrating the holiday, and to never drive impaired or high. New Year's Eve may feel like the ultimate party night, but police will be alert throughout the region for alcohol and/or drug impaired drivers.

Many people choose to start the New Year with a New Year's Resolution. Let your first resolution for the New Year be to NOT drive impaired and to make sure that you and your loved ones get home safely.

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<sup>1</sup> “Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Examination Characteristics of Cannabis Impairment” [Hartman & Huestis, 2013](#). A [2015 study on driving after smoking cannabis](#) stated that THC in marijuana also hurts a driver's ability to multitask, a critical skill needed to drive safely. See accompanying initiative fact sheet.

The Western States Traffic Safety Coalition is committed and unified to keeping the people of our communities' safe during this Holiday. "We" are working hard to raise awareness among the driving public that driving impaired by drugs or alcohol is dangerous and illegal in every state.

We want everyone to ring in the New Year safely with their friends and family. Our goal is zero deaths due to impaired driving on the New Year's holiday.

State law enforcement agencies from Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, and Arizona have joined efforts to address a traffic safety problem that transcends all state jurisdictions; impaired driving. Prior to the last Labor Day Holiday these law enforcement agencies saw an opportunity and responsibility to accomplish their traffic safety mission in a cooperative way by developing the Western States' Traffic Safety Coalition.



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